

# Diabetes Care

## ...Planning for an Emergency

Managing your diabetes during an emergency situation such as a snow or ice storm, hurricane, fire, or even a prolonged power outage, can be very challenging.

The following 6 “Tips” can help you prepare for your diabetes care **before** an emergency occurs.

### Tip 1 – Prepare a Diabetes Emergency Supplies Kit

Do not get caught in an emergency situation without your diabetes supplies! Check (✓) each item from the list below as you pack your emergency supplies kit.

#### DIABETES EMERGENCY SUPPLIES KIT CHECKLIST

Pack at least a 3-day supply

##### All people with diabetes:

- List of medical/health conditions
- Medications (including over-the-counter medications) and copies of all your prescriptions
- Glucose meter, extra batteries, record book, and pen
- Lancets and test strips
- Sharps disposal container

##### For people taking pills and/or insulin:

- Quick sources of sugar (glucose tablets/juice packs/hard candy)
- Snacks such as granola bars, peanut butter/cheese and crackers
- Bottled water and/or sugar-free pop
- Sick-day guidelines

##### For people taking insulin injections:

- Insulin vials/cartridges (see Tip #3)
- Insulin syringes/pens/pen needles
- Glucagon kit (type 1 diabetes)
- Ketone test strips
- Alcohol swabs, tissues

##### For people on an insulin pump; Include items listed above, plus:

- Insertion/infusion sets
- Skin preps, tape
- Cartridges/reservoirs
- Extra pump batteries
- Directions for switching back to insulin injections
- Current records of your:
  - Basal and bolus rates
  - Insulin sensitivity factor
  - Insulin-to-carbohydrate ratios

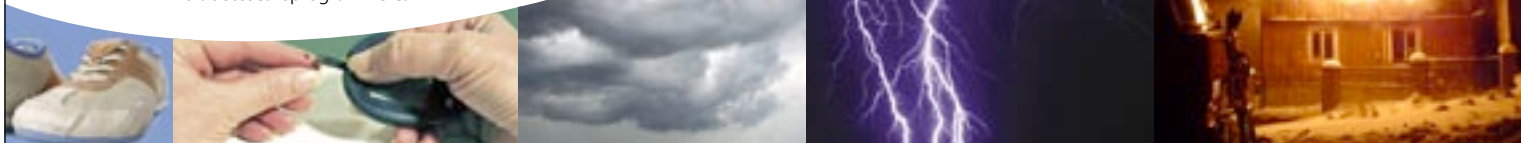
### To make sure your Diabetes Emergency Supplies Kit is easy to carry, accessible, and up to date:

- Keep your supplies in a backpack, duffel bag, or suitcase with wheels.
- Place your “kit” in an easy-to-reach place, where everyone in the household knows where to find it.
- Check your “kit” twice a year to **replace outdated** items (when the time changes in the spring and fall).
- When you renew your prescriptions, put the new medications in your “kit” and use the older ones for your current supply.

DIABETES  
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OF NOVA SCOTIA

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### Tip 2 – Control your Blood Glucose Levels

Emergency situations are stressful, so you should expect “highs” and “lows” in your blood glucose levels.

To maintain good glucose control:

- Check your blood glucose levels more often than usual.
- Be prepared to treat “highs” and “lows”.
- Always carry a fast-acting carbohydrate food with you to treat “lows”; for example, glucose tablets, juice packs, or hard candy.
- Follow your meal plan as closely as possible.
- If you take pills or insulin, eat “extra” snacks for increased physical activity; for example, a serving of fruit, 1/2 sandwich, or cheese/peanut butter and crackers.
- Follow your sick-day guidelines if required.

### Tip 3 – Keep your Insulin Safe

Insulin may be stored at room temperature for 28 days. However, even during an emergency situation (such as a power outage) your extra insulin has to be kept cool and away from direct sunlight, extreme heat, and extreme cold.

**Do not store insulin in your kit. Take it from your current supply at the last minute!**

- Store extra insulin with cold packs in an insulated bag (such as a lunch bag).
- Do not place insulin directly on ice as it will freeze!
- Throw away insulin that has been opened or left unrefrigerated for more than 28 days (except for Detemir/Levemir, a long acting insulin, which is good for 42 days after opening).
- Insulin action will change if outdated insulin is used.

### Tip 4 – Manage your Child’s Diabetes

If you are a parent or caregiver of a child with diabetes be sure to:

- Monitor the child’s blood glucose level frequently.
- Have them follow their meal plan as closely as possible.
- Be prepared to treat “highs” and “lows”.
- Carry a copy of the child’s **current** diabetes management instructions regarding blood glucose testing, insulin guidelines, meal plan, and sick-day guidelines.



### Tip 5 – Protect your Feet

Conditions during emergency situations are often less than ideal, so it is especially important not to walk around in bare feet!

Be sure to:

- Wear sturdy shoes/boots at all times.
- Check or have your feet checked daily for cuts or sores.



### Tip 6 – Relocation to a Shelter

If you are relocated to a shelter:

- Let emergency personnel know that you have diabetes.
- Wear your diabetes identification at all times.
- Keep a copy of your medical history and contact phone numbers (doctor, diabetes educator, pharmacist, etc.) with you.
- Do not share your diabetes supplies (meter, lancets, syringes, etc.) with other people.

**If you need medical assistance and/or you are out of diabetes supplies, medications, or food, contact the nearest hospital or call 911**

For general information about preparing for an emergency refer to:

Phone: 1-800-0-CANADA (1-800-622-6232)

Website: [www.getprepared.ca](http://www.getprepared.ca) (provides link to provincial emergency services management office)